

Narrations and Explanations with regards to Earthquakes

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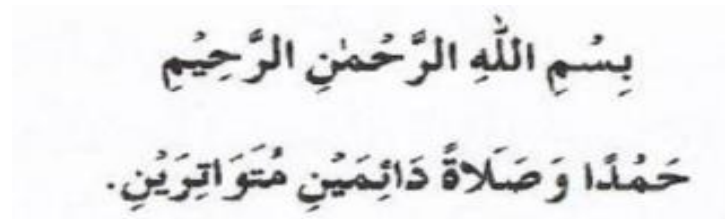
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PURPOSE OF WRITING THIS BOOK



In the name of Allah the most Beneficent the most Merciful

Praise be to Allah Ta'ala and peace and blessings be upon his beloved messenger perpetually

On Tuesday the 23rd of Muharram 1323, an earthquake took place in the outlying areas which happened to be more severe than normal.

As usual, people began to speculate and express various baseless opinions and make up all types of false rumors and stories with regards to the earthquake.

Some people verbally requested me to explain the underlying causes behind the occurrence of earthquakes, and the benefits and wisdom behind it.

I therefore deemed it appropriate to briefly pen down laws and matters pertaining to this topic of earthquakes, to create an awareness amongst people in order for them to benefit by increasing their knowledge and good actions.

This booklet has been broken down into various chapters corresponding with the number of topics discussed.

The ability to do good comes only from Allah, and his hand is the source of all research.

CHAPTER 1

What is the underlying cause behind the occurrence of earthquakes?

What benefit and favorable outcome results from the occurrence of earthquakes?

Hadith of Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam

Ibn Abid Dunyaa has narrated a Hadith to the effect that once the earth began to tremble in the time of Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam

placed his blessed hand on the earth and instructed it to stop shaking, because the time had not yet arrived.

This instruction to the earth to be still was because the time for the occurrence of Qiyaamah had not yet arrived (when the earth will shake violently).

Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam then turned towards his companions and said: Your sustainer wants you to turn to him, so turn to him in repentance.

Beneficial lesson

From this Hadith, the cause of earthquakes becomes apparent, which is 'the sins of man'. The underlying wisdom also becomes known, and that is 'to draw man's attention and motivate him to turn to Allah Ta'ala in repentance'.

Sayings of the Sahabah radiyallāhu 'anhu

The following completes and corroborates the Hadith mentioned above.

During the time of Hadhrat Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu, the earth began to tremble again.

Hazrat Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu addressed the people as follows: O people! The earth is shaking because of a new sin being committed.

I state upon oath that if this (earthquake) happens again, I will not stay with you any longer ie. I will go and live elsewhere.

Beneficial lessons

Imam Ahmed rahimahullāh has narrated the same subject matter with variations in the wording from Hazrat Safiyyah radiyallāhu 'anhā and added that this took place in Madeenah Shareef.

Ibn Abid Duniyaa narrates from Hazrat Anas radiyallāhu 'anhā that he once accompanied another person to visit Hazrat Ayesha radiyallāhu 'anhā. The person said: O mother of the believers! Tell us something pertaining to earthquakes.

Hazrat Ayesha radiyallāhu 'anhā replied: When people commit adultery and fornication as though it's permissible, consume intoxicants and play with flutes and musical instruments, at such a time the sense of honor of Allah Ta'ala comes to the fore and the earth is commanded to shake a little. If they repent and desist (from their evil habits), well and good, otherwise (the demand of such open transgression and rebellion) is that buildings be crushed upon them.

Upon this, the person asked: Is this done as a form of punishment and chastisement for them?

Hazrat Ayesha radiyallāhu 'anhā replied: No, actually it is a mercy and a form of goodness for the believers. As for the disbelievers, it is a punishment, chastisement and unleashing of divine wrath upon them.

Hazrat Anas radiyallāhu 'anhu says that never have I experienced such joy from any Hadith of Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam thereafter, as I experienced upon hearing this particular Hadith.

In this Hadith too, the same cause is mentioned ie. 'the sins of man', and the same underlying wisdom ie. 'to motivate man to turn in repentance to Allah Ta'ala'.

It is an accepted fact amongst the scholars of Hadith, that if a Sahaabi says anything which is beyond the scope of logic and reason, then it will necessarily be understood that he had heard it from Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Such a Hadith is termed as 'Marfoo e Hukmi' (Though the wording is that of the Sahaabi, the subject matter contained therein will be regarded to have been taken from Nabi ﷺ).

The subject matter of this Hadith too is such (ie. it is beyond the scope of logic and reason), therefore the subject matter and meaning of this Hadith will be taken to be from Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Sayings of the Taab'ieen (Those who saw Sahabah radiyallāhu 'anhu

Muhaddith Ibnul Qayyim rahimahullāh narrates in his treatise entitled 'Al Jawaabul Kaafi' that Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz rahimahullāh (The Khalifah of the time) wrote the following and sent it to various towns and cities:

After praising Allah Ta'ala and sending salutations, it should be known and understood that these earthquakes are a manifestation of Allah Ta'ala's retaliation unleashed by him upon his slaves so that they turn in repentance to him.

The Muhaddith has also narrated the following from Hazrat Ka'b Ahbaar, who was a great scholar of the people of the book and was blessed with Imaan during the khilaafat of Hadhrat Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu:

Earthquakes occur due to excessive sinning which takes place on the earth. Out of fear caused by the fact that Allah Ta'ala is watching, the earth begins to tremble.

From this statement too, the same cause and same underlying wisdom come to the fore.

This humble servant has seen the following narration in a reliable source (which has slipped the mind currently as has the name of the narrator) that Allah Ta'ala has placed certain plates or cords inside the earth which are in the hands of Angels. When sins occur in abundance on earth, Allah Ta'ala instructs the Angels to pull the cords at a specific location, which causes the earthquake.

Removal of a misconception

At this juncture, clarification is needed regarding the doubt that could occur, because the philosophers and intelligentsia mention that there are vapors and steam trapped in the earth, and due to pressure they try to exit. When the pressure builds up and the earth cannot contain them, this causes the plates in the earth to move which in turn causes earthquakes or tremors.

From what is witnessed too, this can be correctly assumed to be the apparent cause of earthquakes. This apparent contradiction is removed by understanding that any one occurrence can have multiple underlying causes. Some are primary causes whilst others are secondary causes. The secondary causes are triggered off by the primary causes.

Understand it from the example of a person whose anger is incited due to some provocative words told to him. He becomes overheated with rage and due to immense fury he totally loses his composure until he eventually snaps, has a mental breakdown and lands up in the mental hospital.

The cause of him going to the mental hospital can be attributed to his mental breakdown, or to his getting overheated, or to his anger and rage, or to the provocative words uttered to him.

The provocative words can be said to be the primary cause, whilst the others can be called the secondary causes. There is no contradiction between these causes.

A person who is totally unaware of the human psychology will, upon hearing that the provocative words caused someone to land up in the mental hospital, immediately deny it, no matter how truthful and honest the one conveying the message may be. He will object and consider the news relayed to him to be irrational and utter nonsense.

This is his condition, despite the fact that every person with a reasonable amount of knowledge will know that his objection is totally unfounded, and that what was related to him is one hundred percent correct.

Similarly there are people who are unaware of spiritual medicine, the rights due to Allah Ta'ala and his workings in the creation, the effects and harms of sins, and the link between hidden causes and their effects.

Upon hearing this subject matter described in the Hadith, they flatly deny it without any basis or proof, relying solely upon their deficient opinions and defective understanding.

They fall under the category of:

"Rather, they deny that which they encompass not in knowledge, and whose interpretation has not yet come to them."

Surah Yunus verse 39.

Understand the matter from the following explanation:

It can be said that Allah Ta'ala is displeased with excessive sinning and wishes to shake the earth. For this, he has created molten lava and high-pressure steam by means of which earthquakes occur. The command is issued for the hidden cords to be pulled, which cannot be detected with the naked eyes, like electricity.

By denying this, the philosophers are placing themselves in the category of ignorant laymen (of those times) who deny the great wonders performed by means of electricity. So the actual (hidden) and primary cause of earthquakes is the excessive sinning, and the steam and pressure etc. are the secondary and apparent cause.

I say, what prevents one from accepting the above explanation? Or is it impossible and contrary to logic?

It is the height of injustice and irrationality to deny it by saying that it cannot be understood. What will you say about a person who has never seen a train before, and denies it when you tell him that there is a conveyance that moves speedily without the need for animals to pull or push it, and is able to easily transport large numbers of people and huge quantities of goods from place to place?

Will you not regard him to be a stubborn ignoramus?

So such a stance should not be taken in these matters (of the reasons explained in the Hadith) because we will not tolerate such an approach in worldly matters. To digest this more easily, understand that at times earthquakes are due to natural causes, and at times due to Shar'i causes. On the basis of justice, when Shari'at does not deny the natural causes, then is there any justice in the stance of the philosophers who deny the Shar'i causes without any valid basis?

As far as the statement of Hadhrat Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu which conveys the impression that this is the sole cause of the earthquake, it will be taken to apply to that specific earthquake, and not to all earthquakes.

It thus becomes evident that there is no contradiction between the Shari'at and philosophy with regards to the cause. Philosophy does not delve into underlying points of wisdom; therefore no contradiction can be found in this matter.

NB. There is no concrete evidence for the famous belief that earthquakes are to do with the shedding of bulls' horns, therefore such a baseless belief should be discarded (common belief in India at the time of Hadhrat Thanwi-translator).

CHAPTER 2

Several Past Nations were punished by earthquakes due to sin

Regarding the people of Thamud and the inhabitants of Madyan, it is mentioned:

فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ الرِّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثِيْنَ

*So, the **earthquake** seized them, and they were (found dead) in their homes, fallen on their faces*

In several places mention is made of the overturning of the towns of the people of Nabi Lut Alaihis Salaam. It is obvious that before being overturned, the towns would have been moved and shaken.

Regarding the people of the Bani Israil who accompanied Nabi Moosa Alaihis Salaam to the mount Toor and uttered disrespectful words, it is also mentioned:

وَاخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِّبَيِّنَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمْ الرِّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُمْ
مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِيَّاي أَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي
مَن تَشَاءُ أَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

*And Mūsā selected seventy men from his people for Our appointment. Later when the **earthquake** seized them, he said, "My Lord, had it been Your will, You could have destroyed them earlier, and me too. Would You destroy us for what the foolish among them have done? It is nothing but a trial from You, wherewith you let go astray whom You will, and give guidance to whom You will. You are our protector, so forgive us, and have mercy on us, and You are the best among those who forgive.*

The incident of the sinking of Qarun into the earth is mentioned in the Quraan Shareef. Here too it is apparent that there has to be movement for sinking to take place. It is established that the above mentioned people were punished by means of earthquakes.

CHAPTER 3

The occurrence of abundant of earthquakes are a sign of the Day of Qiyamah

In 'Mishkaat Shareef' - 'The chapter concerning the signs of Qiyaamah', a lengthy Hadith is narrated by Hadhrat Abdullah bin Hawaalah radiyallāhu 'anhū in which Rasūlullah sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam is reported to have said:

When the Islamic Khilāafat will come to the land of Shaam, it will be very close to the occurrence of earthquakes, trials and colossal events. These will occur in close proximity to Qiyaamah.

Narrated by Abu Dawood and Haakim.

It is narrated in the same chapter from Hazrat Abu Hurairah radiyallāhu 'anhū that Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: When such and such actions will take place...(amongst them Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam also mentioned) when a trust will be taken like booty, zakaat will be taken as a penalty, knowledge of Deen will be acquired for worldly motives, wives will be obeyed and mothers disobeyed, relationships with friends will be enhanced, and reduced with fathers, unproductive discussions will take place in the Masaajid, leadership positions will be given to sinners and transgressors, there will be an abundance of music, intoxicants will be consumed in profusion, when the pious predecessors will be insulted, then at such a time anticipate and expect red winds, earthquakes and sinkings into the earth, and other dreadful calamities.

Narrated by Tirmizi

This Hadith corroborates the subject under discussion in the first chapter with regards to identifying the cause of earthquakes.

NB. The tremendous earthquake that will occur specifically on the day of Qiyaamah has been mentioned in numerous places in the Quraan Shareef.

CHAPTER 4

Course of action

It has been established from several narrations of chapter one that the first and most important recourse is to make Taubah (turn in repentance to Allah Ta'ala). In the same chapter, mention was made of the letter of Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz rahimahullāh, which ends with the following:

On a certain (specific) date and month, everyone should gather out in the open. Whoever is able to, should also give out charity.

The aforementioned (Taubah and Sadaqah) should be carried out because Allah Ta'ala states:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿١٣﴾

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ﴿١٥﴾

Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself, and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer.

(The word 'Tazakkaa' is derived from 'Zakaah' which means to purify oneself, or one's wealth by giving charity)

Make the following du'as:

The Du'a of Nabi Adam Alaihis Salaam

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Our Sustainer! We have wronged ourselves - If you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will surely be amongst the losers.

The Du'a of Nabi Nuh Alaihis Salaam

وَالَا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُنْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

“y Lord, I seek refuge with You that I should ask You something of which I have no knowledge. If You do not forgive me and do not show mercy to me, I shall be among the losers.”

The Du'a of Nabi Yunus Alaihis Salaam

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَنَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

There is none worthy of worship except you, you are free of faults, most certainly I was of the oppressors.

In 'Durre Mukhtaar - Kitaabul Kusoof' it is mentioned:

وَإِنْ لَمْ يَحْضُرِ الْإِمَامُ لِلْجُمُعَةِ صَلَّى النَّاسُ فَرَادَى فِي مَنَازِلِهِمْ (أَوْ فِي مَسَاجِدِهِمْ. شَامِي) كَالْخُسُوفِ وَالرَّيْحِ الشَّدِيدَةِ، وَالظُّلْمَةِ الْقَوِيَّةِ نَهَارًا، وَالضُّوءِ الْقَوِيَّ لَيْلًا، وَالْفَزَعِ الْغَالِبِ. وَنَحْوِ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ الْمُخَوِّفَةِ كَالزَّلَازِلِ، وَالصَّوَاعِقِ، وَالتَّلَجِ وَالْمَطَرِ الدَّائِمِينَ، وَعُمُومِ الْأَمْرَاضِ، وَمِنْهُ الدُّعَاءُ بِرَفْعِ الطَّاعُونَ.

The gist of the above is that at the time of intimidating occurrences, each one should read Nafl Salaah individually at home or in the Masjid (Unless it is a Makrooh time).

Examples of the above are the times of lunar eclipse, severe winds, sudden intense darkness during the day, sudden intense brightness during the night, earthquakes, lightning and thunder, heavy rains or hail, outbreaks of sicknesses... NB Du'a for the removal of plagues is included in the category...

The following appears in Raddul Muhtaar:

وَإِنْ شَاؤُوا دَعَاوًا وَلَمْ يُصَلُّوا وَالصَّلَاةُ أَفْضَلُ.

Du'a alone is sufficient, but it is preferable to perform Salaah as well.

This is taken from the Hadith which mentions that:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا حَزَبَهُ أَمْرٌ فَرَعَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ.

When any disturbing event took place, Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam would hasten with urgency to perform Salaah.

With the exclusion of Salaah at the occasions of a solar eclipse (Kusoof) and when seeking rain (Istisqaa), which are performed in Jamaat (congregation), the rest are performed individually.

From all these narrations, the following course of action and etiquettes are derived:

1. 1.To make Taubah (turn in repentance to Allah Ta'ala).It is advisable to also recite the verses quoted earlier on by Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz rahimahullāh.
2. To perform nafl Salaah
3. To make Du'a
4. To give Sadaqah (charity)
5. If one wishes, one may go to an outlying open area and express one's humbleness before Allah Ta'ala

NB. The customary practice of the masses of calling out the Azaan on such occasions, is not established from Shar'i proofs. This innovation should be given up.

CHAPTER 5

Adopting measures to protect oneself during an earthquake

The following is recorded in Durre Mukhtaar before Kitaabul Faraa-idh:

أَخَذَتْهُ الزَّلْزَلَةُ فِي بَيْتِهِ فَفَرَّ إِلَى الْفَضَاءِ لَا يُكْرَهُ بَلْ يُسْتَحَبُّ لِفِرَارِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ
عَنِ الْحَائِطِ الْمَائِلِ.

It is not only permissible, but better and meritorious to leave one's house and go to the outskirts in the open, due to the fact that Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam himself once shifted away from a wall that was about to collapse. This humble one recalls that in all probability he saw this Hadith in Al-Adabul Mufrad of Imam Bukhaari rahimahullāh.

I now conclude this writing with the Du'a that Allah Ta'ala grant us the ability to obey him and the courage to stay away from all sins. May he forgive all of our sins and protect us from all types of disasters and misfortunes.

آمِينَ يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى خَيْرِ خَلْقِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ
وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

Penned by (Hadrath Moulana) Ashraf Ali (Thanwi rahimahullāh)

Friday

Safar 1323